

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	18 August 2015
Unique reference number	SC032496
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Gerard Crowther
Registered person address	363 Kingsway Park Urmston Manchester M41 7FE

Responsible individual	Gerard Crowther
Registered manager	Post vacant
Inspector	Maria McGranaghan

Inspection date	18 August 2015
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Inadequate
There are serious and/or widespread failures that mean young people are not protected, their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded. Young people's care and experiences are poor, and they are not making progress.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Inadequate
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Inadequate

SC477724

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is inadequate because:

- Safeguarding procedures fail to suitably protect young people from harm.
- Allegations made by young people are not suitably recorded or evaluated and do not provide a transparent outcome for young people.
- Behaviour management strategies including the use of sanctions are inconsistent and fail to address unacceptable behaviour. Young people do not therefore benefit from clear behaviour management strategies..
- Responses to young people who are missing from home are inconsistent and in one case resulted in a Police Protection Order being granted to keep a young person safe. Records of young people reported as missing are vague and do not evidence the measures the home take to secure a young person's return or how they aim to reduce such risk taking behaviours.
- Risk management is poor. Assessments are not routinely updated and do not provide suitable guidance on the management of young people with risk taking behaviours.
- Management and staff do not recognise when young people are at risk from their peers. There is a failure to take suitable action to address bullying behaviours.
- Care planning processes are weak. Plans are not regularly updated and therefore do not take into account the changing needs of young people.
- There is a decline in the attendance and attainment of some young people in education. Requests from school to assist young people to 'catch up' are not addressed by the home.
- The home is not working in line with the key aims of the updated Statement of Purpose. The stated aim of 'creating an environment of warmth, stability and responsiveness to help young people thrive' is not being met.

- The home does not have a full staff compliment. This results in staff from other homes and agency staff frequently covering at the home. Consequently, young people experience inconsistencies in their day-to-day lives and fail to develop trusting and stable relationships with staff.
- Arrangements for staff to receive updated and relevant training are deficient. A high number of staff are not up-to-date with safeguarding and physical intervention training. Some staff do not have an up-to-date check with the Disclosure and Barring Service in line with the home's policy.
- The process for internal and external monitoring is inconsistent. Monitoring fails to suitably identify significant areas of concern and the action needed to address them. Monitoring also lacks effective analysis.
- Emergency placements made to the home are not suitably assessed. Effective plans to manage and monitor the placement are also not routinely put in place. There is evidence of significant detrimental impact on resident young people as a result of some inappropriate emergency placements.
- Staff are not trained to address the significant emotional difficulties as stated in the homes Statement of Purpose. This includes depression, self-harm and attachment disorder.
- While all young people have a level of contact with family and friends, staff are not familiar with home environments. Therefore, there is no continued safety assessment for young people having overnight contact.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
In order to meet the quality standards the registered person must: ensure contact arrangements with family and friends is subject to continuous review in order that the welfare of the young person is protected. Where appropriate the registered person may impose conditions, prohibitions or restrictions for the purpose of safeguarding (Regulation 22 (5) (a))	28/09/15
In order to meet the protection of children standard the registered person must: make necessary arrangements at the point of referral to reduce the risk of harm and help each child understand how to keep safe through direct work and risk assessment (Regulation 12 (2) (a) (i) (ii))	28/09/15
In order to meet the protection of children standard the registered person must: ensure staff have the skills to identify to act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm through regular monitoring and review and take effective action specifically with regard to risk management whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare (Regulation 12 (2) (a) (iii) (vi))	28/09/15
In order to meet the protection of children standard the registered person must: ensure the day-to-day care is arranged and delivered through effective care planning and risk management so as to keep each	28/09/15

child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (b))	
In order to meet the leadership and management standard the registered person must enable, inspire and lead a culture in relation to the children's home that ensure the home has sufficient staff to provide care for young people and that the home's workforce provides continuity of care (Regulation 13 (2) (d) (e))	28/09/15
In order to meet the care planning standard the registered manager must ensure: ensure young people receive effectively planned care that is consistently reviewed, updated and followed (Regulation 14 (1) (a) (b) (ii) (c))	28/09/15
ensure the home is conducted at all times in a manner consistent with its Statement of Purpose (Regulation 16 (5))	28/09/15
review and Implement a policy for the prevention of bullying in the home, which in particular sets out the procedure for dealing with an allegation of bullying (Regulation 34 (3))	28/09/15
review and Implement a behaviour management policy which sets out the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to young people living in the home. The registered person must keep the behaviour management policy under review and where necessary revise it (Regulation 35 (10) (b) (2))	28/09/15
the registered person must establish a procedure for considering complaints and or allegations made on or behalf of young people. A record must be made of the complaint and or allegation, the action taken in response and the outcome of any investigation (Regulation 39 (1) (3))	28/09/15
ensure records are kept of any allegation in respect of abuse or neglect and the action taken in response (Regulation 34 (2) (c) (d))	28/09/15
ensure case records including risk assessments and care plans are kept up-to-date and signed and dated by the author of each entry (Regulation 36 (1) (b) (c))	28/09/15

ensure satisfactory information in respect of all persons employed to work with young people in the home has been obtained in relation to Schedule 2 of the Regulations and is kept up-to-date in line with the home's policy (Regulation 32 (7) (b))	28/09/15
ensure all employees undertake appropriate continuing professional development (Regulation 33 (4) (a))	28/09/15
ensure the independent person has access to records in order to form an opinion as to whether young people are effectively safeguarded and the conduct of the home promotes young people's well-being (Regulation 44 (2) (b) (4) (a) (b))	28/09/15
complete a review of the quality of care provided for young people and maintain a system for the monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the quality of care, feedback and opinions of young people and the actions necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided in the home. Supply a copy to HMCI within 28 days of its completion (Regulation 45 (1) (2) (a) (b) (c) (4) (a))	28/09/15
ensure HMCI is notified if a child is involved in or subject to or is suspected of being involved in or subject to sexual exploitation, where there is an allegation against the home or persons working there, an incident requiring police involvement which is considered serious or there is another incident relating to a young person which the manager considers to be serious (Regulation 40 (30) (a) (4) (a) (b) (c))	28/09/15

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure each young person is helped to attend education and training in accordance to their plans that staff support young people with home study by

encouraging them to learn independent study skills (Guide to the Quality Standards 5.18))

- ensure young people's bedrooms and bathrooms are suitably decorated to a good standard (Guide to Quality Standards 3.19))
- ensure the use of any monitoring equipment has a written policy describing how this will support the safeguarding and well-being of those living and working in the home (Guide to the Quality Standard 3.16))
- ensure each child's day-to-day health and well-being needs are met. Staff should work to make the children's' home an environment that supports children's physical, mental and emotional health, in line with the approach set out in the home's Statement of Purpose. Health care plans should be regularly reviewed and updated. (Guide to the Quality Standards 7.3))
- ensure staff have the capacity and competence to build constructive, warm relationships with young people that actively promote positive behaviour, provides the foundations for managing any negative behaviour. Staff should have the skills to respond to each young person's individual behaviour. Where necessary they should manage conflict, maintain constructive dialogues and react appropriately if challenged by a young person in their care. (Guide to the Quality Standards 8.14))
- ensure staff continually and actively assess the risks to each young person and the arrangements in place to protect them. Where there is a safeguarding concern, their placement plan must include details of the steps the home will take to manage any assessed risk on a day-to-day basis (Guide to the Quality Standards 9.5))
- ensure all incidents of control and discipline are recorded and subject to systems of regular scrutiny to ensure they are fair (Guide to the Quality Standard 9.36))
- ensure staff understand there may be circumstances where a child can be prevented from leaving a home to carry out gang related activities, use drugs or to meet someone who is sexually exploiting them or intends to do so. Any such measures of restraint must be proportionate and in place for no longer than is necessary to manage the immediate risk (Guide to the Quality Standards 9.52))
- ensure the manager monitors and reviews the patterns and trends of turnover of staff, whether agency or directly employed, and be able to understand and where possible, address any negative trends (Guide to the Quality Standards 10.19))

- ensure the home only accepts placements for young people where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of young people (Guide to the Quality Standards 11.4))

Full report

Information about this children's home

- The home is registered to accommodate six young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties
- The home is one of a number of homes operated by the local authority

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/01/2015	CH - Interim	Sustained effectiveness
09/10/2014	CH - Full	Requires improvement

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Inadequate
In a twelve month period the home has experienced three managers. Two managers and two senior residential workers have left the service. This has resulted in inconsistencies within the staff team due to the regular use of agency and relief workers who regularly cover shifts in the home. Consequently, young people fail to make strong and trusting relationships with staff which impacts on their emotional resilience and ability to form positive attachments. Care planning arrangements are poor. Young people who are placed in an initial emergency situation which has been extended, do not have a residential care plan, behaviour management plan, health care plan or individualised safeguarding plan. For other residents, plans are not routinely updated. Therefore, changes including long term arrangements and revised risk analysis are incomplete. Similarly, young people do not routinely benefit from planned on-to-one sessions to address the aims of the placement, behaviours or areas for concern. Consequently, there is no clear structure to assist young people to make changes in their lives and help them achieve their placement objectives. All young people attend local schools, colleges or work placements and generally attendance for most young people is good. However, some young people's engagement with education is poor. For example, one young person's attendance has dropped from 73% to 51% since October 2014 as a result of late arrival to school. Limited progress is made in attainment. A request from a school to undertake extra Math and English during the holidays has failed to be facilitated by the staff. There is no evidence of how staff are addressing persistent late arrival at school which clearly impacts on the progress of this young person. Contact between family and friends are promoted within the home. All young people have varying levels of contact including weekend stays. However, there is a clear lack of risk management to ensure young people's safety while on contact. For example, It is evident that once the social worker has completed an initial assessment of the family home, staff do not continue to check that the environment or safety arrangements remain the same. A staff member said, 'We do not go into the home because the social worker has already been in. We drop them off and pick them up.' The manager said, 'It is their home, we don't want to	

feel like we are intruding. If there was a problem we would go in'. The failure to ensure the continued suitability and safety of contact compromises the safety of young people.

Young people have access to information about making a complaint because this is displayed in the home. However, although there are a number of issues such as bullying recorded in young people's daily records, there are no records to suggest that staff have discussed the problems or invited a young person to make a complaint. No young people's complaints have been recorded since March 2015.

Behaviour management is inconsistent. Some young people do not have an individual plan while others are not up-to-date. Therefore, staff are not provided with specific guidance on individual methods of managing behaviour. As a result, young peoples' behaviour is more challenging. This is reflected in the incident log and daily observations sheets that include, threats to life, substance misuse and criminal damage. This inconsistent approach fails to enable young people to understand their own behaviour in order to address it and make essential changes beneficial to their future.

Most young people are registered with local health professionals and receive support from the Looked after Children's Nurse who frequently visits the home. While health care plans are in place, these are not routinely updated with identified concerns such as self-harming or substance misuse behaviours. Young people who are placed on an extended emergency basis and are awaiting a permanent placement do not have their current health needs assessed and are not registered with any local practitioner.

Young people with a plan of independent living are assisted to some degree to develop skills that will assist them in their future. For example, cooking, budgeting and making application for tenancy. Pathway plans are in place and this goes some way to guiding staff in their work with young people.

Recreational activities are made available to young people and include, horse riding, gym, cadets and camping trips. In-house activities include, arts and crafts, pamper nights, WII games and baking. Most young people are motivated to engage and were observed enjoying a pamper evening.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Inadequate
This home provides accommodation for five young people with a sixth bed being used on an emergency basis. In the past twelve months there have been eight new admissions to the home with seven being discharged. In some cases, these referrals have had a detrimental impact on those already resident in the home, for example, disruptive and unsettling behaviours. Although impact assessments are completed, they have little bearing on the decision to place inappropriately within the home. The placements manager said, 'Where there are no beds available elsewhere, we have to place where there is a bed.' Young people's safety is compromised within the home. There is a clear lack of effective risk management in order to help young people reduce risk taking behaviours. Risk assessments are either not completed or updated to aid staff in their response to a young person being missing from the home. There is a lack of recorded evidence that staff attempted to stop a young person leaving where the risk of child sexual exploitation as described by a police sergeant was 'The highest risk in the UK'. A staff member said, 'We can't physically stop a young person leaving.' There is no evidence of staff undertaking a search of local areas or calling at known addresses. As a result, a Police Protection Order was placed on one particular young person resident in the home. The police report that staff frequently call upon them to help locate a young person who goes missing, due to a lack of available staff in the home. Bringing additional staff into the home, did not reduce the level of risk. The manager said, 'Because the young person has a history of assaulting staff they will not physically intervene.' Consequently, the lack of effective planning, risk management and guidance for staff results in the failure to suitably protect and safeguard young people. Some young people experience bullying within the home. Daily records evidence a young person's experience of being targeted by another resident. However, there are no formal records in respect of episodes of bullying or details of how they are managed. Where behaviours are identified individual risk assessments are not updated, one-to-one sessions are not completed and there are no sanctions in respect of the young person who is bullying. The manager said, 'This is just peer bickering, some young people wind others up. Sanctions are ineffective in the home'. Consequently, young people's personal safety is compromised by a lack of understanding, risk management and effective response to episodes of bullying in	

the home.

Systems for managing allegations against staff are deficient. Where allegations are made they are not recorded formally. Therefore, it is not possible to track the investigation and outcome of such allegations from the young person's records. Electronic records do not provide details of the investigation or how the outcome was fed back to the young person. Where a young person reiterates an allegation at a later date, no action is taken by the manager to readdress this matter. The manager said, 'This young person has a history of making false allegations'. Upon review, there is no evidence to support this.

Behaviour management is inconsistent and fails to support young people to make effective change. Specific plans to address challenging or inappropriate behaviour lack depth and do not provide suitable guidance to staff. Young people were observed using offensive and derogatory language in front of staff without challenge. Although there is some evidence of sanctions being imposed, they do not correspond with behaviour management plans and are not routinely recorded. The failure to record actions taken as a result of inappropriate behaviour means they cannot be monitored or evaluated for effectiveness. Therefore, young people do not benefit from a consistent planned approach to their behaviour in order to effect positive and lasting change.

Physical intervention is rarely used in the home. Where this measure has been previously applied, records contain the appropriate level of detail including a debrief with young people. However, although staff receive training in the areas of safeguarding and physical intervention, many have not attended refresher courses in accordance with the homes policies. In recent months where a physical intervention is deemed as an appropriate measure, this is not undertaken by staff. Examples include, a high risk young person leaving the building without permission and removing a young person from another's bedroom where there is a suggestion of drug use or potential for intimidation. In these and other recorded circumstances, there is an over reliance of police intervention. This demonstrates that, staff do not have the confidence and skill to effectively manage risk taking behaviours.

Young people do not benefit from a strong and consistent permanent staff team. In the past twelve months there has been changes to the management of the home, the senior team and residential team resulting in the over use of relief and agency workers. This has considerably impacted on the consistency of care provided to the young people resident.

The physical environment is safe and secure. The ground floor is suitably

decorated and maintained. However, some young people's bedrooms require redecorating to create a warm and safe environment. Likewise, young people's bathrooms remain on the agenda for refurbishment.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Inadequate
The Registered Manager resigned in July 2014. Since this time a manager recruited to the home also resigned with a further manager being appointed to the home in March 2015. An application was received by Ofsted to become the Registered Manager and all relevant checks are now complete. Monitoring systems are poor, resulting in young people's care not being routinely monitored or reviewed in line with their changing needs. The aims of the placement including goals and targets are not up-dated to ensure work completed with young people is purposeful and relevant. The managers monitoring reports are not forwarded to Ofsted for review. A report reviewed during the inspection highlighted a clear lack of analysis; failure to identify risk and failure to fully evaluate the care young people receive. External monitoring of the home takes place on a regular basis and in some cases includes feedback from parents, social workers and young people. Monitoring reports are provided to the manager outlining identified areas for improvement. But, because some records are not readily available in the home, reports do not include areas of concern such as, allegations against staff and bullying. Consequently, the external monitoring does not capture the full picture of the care and management of young people living in the home. It is acknowledged that there have been three changes in management during the past twelve months resulting in inconsistent supervision of staff. The new manager has now provided supervision to all staff. Staff say they feel supported by the new manager and are able to discuss matters of concern with them. However, the home are not following their own policy to ensure that staff have an up-to-date Disclosure and Barring Certificate. Impact assessments for emergency placements to the home are ineffective. Where referrals are deemed to be inappropriate for the home or have the potential to	

impact on other residents, placements are agreed. Similarly, young people placed in an emergency situation do not have their needs comprehensively assessed. As a result, some young people do not receive the necessary support and guidance while accommodated in the home. Responses to concerns such as, risk taking behaviours are reactive and inconsistent and impacts on the overall management and safety arrangements for young people.

The Statement of Purpose has recently been reviewed by the new manager. However, some information is inaccurate with particular regard to; the registration status of the current manager, training of staff and the use of monitoring equipment.

Notifications required in accordance with regulation are not consistently forwarded to Ofsted for review. For example, matters pertaining to allegations against staff and concerns for young people with a high risk of child sexual exploitation have not been notified to Ofsted. This means that the Regulatory body cannot review the actions taken by the home to maintain the on-going safety of young people placed there.

The home is judged as inadequate. There is a significant lack of management oversight in respect of care planning, risk management and the quality of the care provided to young people. Seventeen requirements and ten recommendations are made in respect of these matters.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families. In addition the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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